

Wednesday, November 27 2024



**THE GREAT LAKES
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**NATIONAL
MUSEUM
of the
GREAT
LAKES**

**Preserving Great Lakes
History Since 1944**

Col. James
M. Schoonmaker
Museum Ship
Museum Tug Ohio

Inland Seas®

Peachman
Great Lakes Shipwreck
Research Program



*A different story
in every drop!*

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Museum of the Great Lakes to offer our steadfast support for House Concurrent Resolution 14 (HCR 14) and to advocate for the passage of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has played a pivotal role in **improving the health and vitality of the Great Lakes** since its inception in 2010. Through the dedicated efforts of the GLRI, significant progress has been made in addressing environmental challenges facing the Great Lakes region. This initiative has facilitated successful cleanup and delisting of areas of concern, marking significant milestones in the restoration of these vital ecosystems. Additionally, the GLRI has spearheaded efforts to restore 50,000 acres of coastal wetlands across the region, enhancing habitat for countless species of wildlife and bolstering the resilience of our coastal communities.

One of the most pressing issues tackled by the GLRI has been the reduction of phosphorus runoff and harmful algal blooms, particularly in Lake Erie. These efforts have not only improved water quality but also safeguarded public health and supported the economic vitality of our region.

Our region's vitality is inextricably linked to the health of the Great Lakes.

Problems that affect the well-being of these majestic bodies of water directly impact the economic and physical health of our companies and community members.

Toledo, in particular, thrives because of its close relationship with the Great Lakes, both historically and economically.

Did you know that if the Great Lakes were a standalone country, they would boast the third-largest economy in the world? This staggering statistic underscores the **immense economic significance of this region**. At the National Museum of the Great Lakes, it is our mission to not only preserve the rich history of the Great Lakes but also to illuminate their profound impact on our region.

We have witnessed firsthand the positive impact of the GLRI on our communities and our visitors. By preserving and promoting the rich history and heritage of the Great Lakes, we strive to inspire stewardship and appreciation for these remarkable bodies of water. Each year, we welcome visitors from all corners of the globe to Toledo to learn about the Great Lakes and their enduring legacy. Last year alone, we experienced a remarkable 46% increase in visitation, a testament to the growing interest in and appreciation for these extraordinary bodies of water.

As an institution deeply committed to the preservation and promotion of the Great Lakes, we wholeheartedly endorse House Concurrent Resolution 14 and urge members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024. This legislation represents a crucial investment in the future of the Great Lakes region and ensures these natural treasures remain a source of pride and prosperity for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We stand ready to support any efforts to advance the goals of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and protect the ecological and economic integrity of our region.

Sincerely,

Kate Fineske
NMGL/GLHS Executive Director